

DIRECT TESTIMONY OF ARLENE ACKERMAN

Q: What is your name and address?

My name is Arlene Ackerman, my address is 388 Beale Street, San Francisco.

Q: What is your current position?

I am the Superintendent of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD).

Q: Would you please summarize your educational background and prior work experience, particularly in the field of education?

I earned a Bachelor of Arts from Harris Stowe Teachers College, a Master of Arts in Educational Administration and Policy from Washington University, and a Masters of Arts in Education from Harvard University. I also recently earned a Doctorate of Education in Administration, Planning, and Social Policy from Harvard University's Urban Superintendent's Program. I have worked in the public education field for over 36 years, having served as a teacher, a principal, and a director of a number of education-oriented programs, including the Upward Bound Program for first generation college-bound students and the Basic Schools Academy for at-risk high school youth. Prior to becoming the Superintendent of the SFUSD in August 2000, I served as the Chief Academic Officer and Superintendent of the District of Columbia Public Schools for three years. I also serve or have served on the boards of a number of organizations, including the Harvard Urban Superintendents Advisory Board, KQED Public Broadcasting Board of Directors, Network for Instructional Television, Inc. Board of Directors, San Francisco Fine Arts Board of Trustees, San Francisco Symphony Board of Governors and the San Francisco Workforce Investment Board. In 2001, President George W. Bush appointed me to the Historical Black College Board. I am currently the Chair-Elect of the Council of the Great City Schools and I serve on Governor Schwarzenegger's Advisory Committee for Education Excellence. For my work in education and my contributions to the communities I have served, I

1 have received numerous honors, such as the Uniquely University City Award for Outstanding
2 Service, the Apple for the Teacher Award from Iota Lambda Sorority, the Distinguished Alumni
3 Award from Harris Stowe Teachers College, the Community Leadership Award from the Golden
4 Gate Chapter of American Women in Radio and Television, and was named a McDonnell
5 Douglass Fellow (Urban Superintendents Program).

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7 **Q: What are your duties as the Superintendent of the SFUSD?**

8 As Superintendent of the SFUSD, I have overall responsibility for the District's
9 operations, subject to the oversight of the Board of Education, which is composed of seven
10 members elected at large to serve four-year terms. The SFUSD includes more than 160 pre-
11 school, elementary, middle and high schools and employs over 8,000 principals, teachers,
12 educators and administrative and staff members. My mission as Superintendent is to transform
13 the public schools of San Francisco into an exemplary school system, and, to that end, since I
14 took office, my administration has been working on creating a strong foundation upon which the
15 SFUSD can build sustained improvement.

16
17 **Q: And in regard to KALW(FM)?**

18 As the SFUSD is the licensee of KALW(FM), the Station is among my oversight
19 responsibilities. The Station's General Manager handles the day-to-day responsibilities of the
20 Station and prepares an annual "State of the Station" report that addresses the status of the Station
21 including its successes and challenges. Within the SFUSD, I have tasked Lorna Ho, Special
22 Assistant to the Superintendent, Office of Public Engagement and Information, and Myong Leigh,
23 Chief of Policy and Planning, to keep me abreast of issues facing the Station and the Station's
24 activities.

25
26 **Q: Were you aware of the challenge to the Station's license renewal when you became**
27 **Superintendent?**

28 I became aware of the Station's license renewal challenge shortly after taking office. I

1 had no prior experience in radio station operations so my first task was to recruit a competent
2 station manager. *I knew we needed a skilled professional in charge of the Station's day-to-day*
3 *activities and I personally interviewed the prime candidates recommended by a selection*
4 *committee. Nicole Sawaya was both my and the selection committee's top choice.*

5
6 **Q: In addition to hiring Ms. Sawaya, have you made any other changes at the Station in**
7 **response to the license challenge?**

8 I have also implemented procedures to ensure that all submissions by the SFUSD to the
9 FCC are accurate and complete. **Proposed SFUSD Exhibit No. 48** is a memorandum that I
10 circulated within the SFUSD in September 2004 to address compliance with FCC rules and
11 regulations. This memorandum (i) directs that all applications, reports, and filings made by the
12 District with the FCC need to be cleared in advance with outside communications counsel and (ii)
13 requests that the Station Manager, with the assistance of outside communications counsel and the
14 District's legal office, provide me a report prior to the start of each calendar year, reporting on the
15 status of regulatory compliance matters involving KALW, including reports and applications that
16 are expected to be filed with the FCC in the upcoming year.

17
18 **Q: Do you think the Station is an asset to the San Francisco/Bay Area community?**

19 Yes. During my tenure as Superintendent, I've witnessed what an exceptional radio
20 station KALW is and how well it serves the interests and needs of San Francisco listeners. I
21 especially commend the Station's activities related to education.

22 KALW(FM) plays a substantial role in increasing community awareness of issues of
23 importance to our students and their parents and teachers. The Station devotes a significant
24 amount of air time to live broadcasts of the Board of Education's regular meetings that are held
25 on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month (excluding July), and broadcasts programs that
26 address issues in or affecting San Francisco's public schools, such as "Looking at Education"
27 which is broadcast immediately before the regular Board meetings. KALW additionally
28 broadcasts the school lunch menu each morning before school and in the afternoon for the next

1 day's menu, and promotes special events such as the annual School Enrollment Fair.

2 *Periodically, I also have the opportunity personally to address the community using*
3 KALW's airwaves. In particular, during the period from July 16, 2003 to July 16, 2004, my
4 "State of the Schools" address was broadcast on KALW, which aired on January 21, 2004 from 7
5 to 7:30 p.m. I am grateful that the SFUSD has this media venue to reach out to the community
6 that we serve.

7 The Station has also reached out to students directly. As the Commission is aware, the
8 Station's facilities are located at one of the District's schools— Phillip and Sala Burton Academic
9 High School, a multicultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-racial high school in southeastern San
10 Francisco. Recently KALW News, NPR's Next Generation Project, and Radio & TV News
11 Directors' Association (RTDNA) collaborated in conducting a student training program with a
12 group of Burton High School students. NPR journalists worked for a week with the students and
13 the Station's news director to produce a short documentary entitled "My Neighborhood:
14 Visitation Valley."

15 I also applaud KALW for its outreach initiatives to college students in the San Francisco
16 community. Since 2002, the Station has recruited interns from the diverse student populations of
17 San Francisco State University, City College of San Francisco, and the University of California
18 Graduate School of Journalism. Through its internship program, KALW provides a site for
19 students to gain hands-on work experience. Interns are able to learn how a radio station operates
20 and gain exposure to career opportunities in broadcasting. Interns also have the opportunity to
21 work with potential mentors among Station employees.

1 I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

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4 Signature: 

5 Executed on May 2, 2005
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12 Federal Communications Commission
13 Docket No. 07-191 Exhibit No. 47
14 Presented by SFUSD
15 Disposition { Identified 5-26-05
Received 5-26-05
Rejected _____
16 Reporter Eric Shadwick
17 Date 5-26-05
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